

Belmont Council on Aging Board of Directors Meeting

December 2, 2002-7:30 P.M.

Present: B. Miranda, N.Niv-Vogel, M.L. Ahearn, J. Bruschi, J.Kantor, E. Hamann, J. Horner, H.Kazarian, T.Morabito, P.Solomon.

Absent: E. Finnegan, V. Falvey.

The minutes of November 4, 2002 meeting were approved as written.

Springwell (formerly WSES) report of Annual Meeting of Nov. 19, 2002 by E. Hamann: Springwell director, Sue Temper, reported that settling into the new facility was a work in progress, but that overall things are going well. A tag line to the new name change, Springwell, has been added. It is "solutions for seniors and their families". Client services have seen an increase of frail elders with more complicated medical diagnoses. Enhanced programs are being offered so that people can remain independent in their homes. This is the first step towards implementing the Olmstead decision. Title IIIB and D grants funded four new organizations. Title III E grants funded for the first time national family care support programs such as the respite program in Belmont. Springwell is moving from "program focus" to "person focus". Their target population is not just seniors but those who take care of them as well.

E. Hamann alerted the Board members about an advocacy initiative to contact state representatives and to encourage them to stop more cuts in funds allocated for home care.

Director's Report

Nava reported that by December 13 all department heads are expected to submit service level budget and reduced level budget. No cost of living increases for union or non-union members will be calculated in. She stated that if the Town went by the level service budget it is possible that reduction in hours of one or two employees may be necessary. She explained that the budget exercise would also be an opportunity to express the needs of the department.

The report on the result of the November 12 staff retreat resulted in a number of excellent suggestions for a new senior center. The one Nava cited as being the most helpful is inclusion of several private counseling rooms in the new senior center design. In terms of the future of the COA staff felt that it was important to publicize the social services that are not as well known around Town. A brochure specifically outlining social services will be produced. Arlene O'Brien of the Friends organization has independently been working on publicizing COA social services in articles for the Belmont newspaper.

The special teen respite program was featured in the recent Gerontological Society of America's annual convention in Boston as an exhibit of innovative programs in our state. The program will also be featured in an article later this month in the "50+Advocate" newspaper.

There was another request this past month for a change in supermarkets for the shopping transportation route. Mike Salvo was flexible and tried out the Stop & Shop in Watertown. It was deemed too far and too large a store with no real savings. So the shoppers expressed feeling satisfied with continuing to shop at Shaw's.

H. Kazarian and Nava met with the head of Building & Grounds to discuss safety issues at the senior center. They all developed a plan whereby risk of injury due to acorns and leaves in the fall would be handled by a coordinated effort of staff in both departments to sweep frequently. K. Looney of B&G committed to buying mats to prevent slush and water entering the halls of the center in the winter. He also committed to purchasing protective covers for the thermostats so that proper heating can be maintained. Henry reported that Mr. Looney stated that the concerns of the director were reasonable and legitimate.

The Friends organization surpassed their goal of raising \$1000 for an initial membership drive. The volunteer hostesses of the COA are planning to create a cookbook as a fundraiser under the auspices of the Friends organization.

Old Business

By-Law Committee Report: J. Kantor distributed copies of the first draft of by-laws that he and B. Miranda prepared. B. Miranda requested that board members read the draft and report back at the January meeting with feedback and suggestions. A final vote on acceptance of the by-laws will be taken in March. The board was asked to take note of and consider the section about consecutive member absences being reported to the town. Discussion was also held on the number of members required to be present at an election meeting and that number will be discussed in January (may be different from the number required for a quorum at a general business meeting).

B. Miranda reported that there is no news regarding activity on a future senior center. She said that she asked seniors at the recent Belmont Senior Organization Christmas party to be ready to each call two or three Town Meeting members right before the next Special Town Meeting.

New Business

B. Miranda summarized a position paper from the Chairman of the Belmont Affordable Housing Committee concerning affordable housing on the McLean property. The issue for the COA board was whether or not to support the original language of the sub-district bylaw as meaning 30 affordable senior units for people with *up to* the 120% of median income *vs.* 30 affordable senior units for people *at* 120% of the median income as the developer is requesting. The Zoning Board of Appeals has held a hearing on this issue and will accept public comment until December 9 before making their decision. Ms. Miranda asked if the Board would like to address the issue since this is senior housing. After discussion, the board unanimously agreed to support the recommendation that the

housing units be designated for seniors with *up to* 120% of the median income. B. Miranda will write a letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals immediately.

Several board members brought up the issue of **parking at the Waverly Oaks** housing complex and noted that recently four new parking spaces for visitors there were provided along the driveway. B. Miranda stated that she and Nava would be meeting with Anne Paulsen to discuss the process of obtaining grant money for elevators at the site and working with the Housing Authority toward this goal.

Transportation donation issue- Nava reported that the transportation department requested that the policy regarding donations be updated with a possible proposal to 1) increase the amount for suggested donations and 2) to publicize the suggested amount on the vehicles. She cited that the cost of a ride for the meal-site program has never increased since it began over a decade ago. The number of rides and participants in the meal-site program has decreased over this past year. Nava explained that the reason for the change in ride usage is because the number of frail elders has increased without younger seniors taking their place. J. Horner made a motion to put up a sign in the vehicles with suggested amounts. The motion did not pass. Several board members stated that it would not be fair to ask the meal-site participants for more since they tend to be the most disadvantaged seniors. Several board members did say that the issue of trying to raise more funds through the transportation program should still be considered. It was suggested that larger donations to COA from participants of the recreational bus trips might be a more equitable way to raise funds. Nava will investigate the feasibility of such a policy, and the issue will be taken up again in January.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lou Ahearn